



Views of the U.S Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan on the Recent JPSM Meeting

The U.S. Embassy in Sudan commends the Africa Union High Level Implementation Panel, led by President Thabo Mbeki, which has just concluded a special meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) of Sudan and South Sudan. Two previous meetings of the JPSM had failed to agree on the way forward to demilitarize the border and activate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, critical security arrangements from the Cooperative Agreement reached by Presidents Bashir and Kiir on September 27. Failure to move forward on these had held up implementation of the other agreements reached on September 27, including the resumption of production and export of South Sudan's oil. Thanks to the leadership of the AUHIP, and the contribution of the UNISFA Force Commander, the parties have now agreed on a plan for implementation.

Nevertheless, we note that problems could arise. In these past meetings, each side has raised issues, however legitimate, that prevented movement forward. The Government of Sudan, for example, sought further assurances that South Sudan is not providing support to forces fighting the Sudanese government in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur. South Sudan has raised questions about the exact dimensions of one of the key border areas to be demilitarized.

However, as the U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Princeton Lyman, who observed these talks, recently stated, "these security issues are best addressed in the agreements already reached." Implementing plans for demilitarization and monitoring provide a means of assurance to both parties about respective support to rebels in each other's country. Reports of violations can be reported to the Ad Hoc committees charged with investigating such charges. Other means and mechanisms for assurance can be proposed in this process, but they should not interfere with the immediate implementation of the demilitarization process. The dimensions of the areas to be demilitarized were clearly defined in the negotiations leading to the September 27 Summit. Opening up the question again risks blocking implementation of the agreements. We hope this issue can be quickly resolved.

We are especially concerned that not only the security agreements be implemented but also that the understandings reached at this last JPSM meeting will lead the parties to unblock oil and move forward with the other agreements signed on September 27. We are encouraged that the nomination process to establish the Abyei Administrative structures continues to move forward, and it is essential that the parties move to accept the nominations to enable the immediate establishment of the administration, council, and police service. Failure to let these agreements proceed is producing disillusionment about the validity of the summit agreements, diminishing the spirit of hope and peaceful cooperation that welcomed the Summit results, and only encouraging those, in both countries, who have little faith in the prospect of peaceful relations between the two countries. Both countries will benefit enormously if these other agreements – on oil, open border, trade, and personal freedoms – all go forward.

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